



The Party Goes Local

The final part of this course on Development is concerned with the building of the mass collective Subject of History, starting with the main conscious agent of such process of organisation, the communist party; in this case, the South African Communist Party, the SACP.

The SACP is still in the process of converting its branches to “Voting District” branches. The SACP is also determined to achieve a **500 000 membership**, or roughly one per cent of the South African population.

Urban Voting Districts in South Africa contain some 3,000 voters on average located within a radius of some 7,5 km of each Voting District’s single voting station. Rural Voting Districts accommodate some 1,200 voters located within a radius of some 10 km of the voting station. There are normally several, often five or six, Voting Districts in each electoral ward.

SACP Party Branches are supposed to have a minimum of **25**

members according to its Constitution, which has not changed. The same rules apply to the new situation.

The next item in this last part of the Development Series will focus on the **ANC's** Imvuselelo Campaign, and the third and final instalment will focus on **SADTU's** recruitment, which in turn is in parallel with recruitment by other trade unions within and outside of **COSATU**, our federation, and with other mass organisations.

Localisation of the Alliance

What are the implications of all this recruitment? What qualitative changes may arise from the envisaged quantitative increase?



The National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance has been called “tripartite”, referring to **the SACP** - the vanguard party of the working class, **the ANC** – the mass, class-alliance, unity-in-action liberation movement, and **COSATU**, the federation of mass industrial trade unions. But in addition to these, the historic “civic” movement **SANCO** has a status as the fourth member of the Alliance. If there was a free-standing Women’s Movement, it could serve as the fifth independent Alliance partner.

The qualitative change which can be expected if the SACP succeeds in creating a substantial number of branches at Voting District level, and if the ANC is able to consolidate its 100-member-plus-per-ward branch structure, and if the local structures of the Trade Union movement can become similarly well-defined, is that the **localisation of the Alliance** will become a practical possibility.

New:

Voting District structures established by the ANC in 2014 / 2015:

Establishment of Sub-branch Coordinating Teams (SBCTs)

The BEC must establish sub-branch structures equal to the number of voting districts (VDs) in the ward. The structures so established shall be called Sub-Branch Coordinating Teams (SBCTs) because they do not have executive powers as they are coordinating structures.

The SBCT shall be responsible for the following;

- Establishment and maintenance/servicing of Street Coordinators in the VD
- Establishment and maintenance/servicing of Political Education Study Circles in the VD
- Coordinating of membership recruitment, growth and maintenance in the VD. This includes membership of the Leagues and MKMVA

- Identifying problems in the community in the VD, proposing and coordinating solutions to such problems
- Dissemination of information to ANC members in the VD

The members of the SBCT are appointed by the BEC, not elected at a meeting of members convened at VD level.

The BEC must appoint the following seven members of the SBCTs.

- Convener of SBCT, to act as the chairperson and facilitator
- Coordinator of SBCT, to act as the secretary
- Member responsible for membership recruitment and coordination
- Member responsible for political education
- Member responsible for campaigns
- Member responsible for coordination of issues on governance
- Member responsible for coordination of structures below the VD

The names of the members appointed in the SBCTs must be announced by the BEC at the BGM. This must be after consulting these individual members and their acceptance of the responsibility.

For many years past, sundry expressions of disappointment been heard saying that the Alliance does not function at local level. The main stumbling block to this local functioning of the

Alliance was never a lack of intention but rather the lack of equivalent basic structures across the three main organisations. The SACP especially was apt to be patchy in terms of its coverage on the ground, with hardly any organisational correspondence to the ANC at branch level. SACP Districts have also hardly talked to ANC Regions or to COSATU locals. Only at Provincial and National levels have the three structures been equivalent across all three of the main Alliance organisations.

The coming increase in membership of the SACP and the ANC will mean that it will be possible to populate viable parallel structures all the way down to branch level. This in turn will open up the prospect of a renewed relevance for SANCO, which can be the locus of combination with other mass organisation, of women, of religious people, and more.

The implications for the possibility of conscious, all-round development of the country in the fullest sense are profound.

The attached document is a compilation of the Commission Report on Building a Strong SACP from a Conference of Commissars, and notes on forming Voting District Branches, including extracts from the SACP Constitution as it was prior to the 13th Congress. Please refer to the latest version of the constitution before acting.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Building a strong SACP, Forming a VD Branch](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).